

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Intersessional work of the Standing Committee  
2020-2021

TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES (TESTUDINES SPP.):  
UPDATE ON PROGRESS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat in the context of [Decisions 18.286 and 18.287](#) on *Tortoises and freshwater turtles (Testudines spp.)*, directed to Madagascar and the Standing Committee respectively.
2. Decision 18.286 requests Madagascar to review its implementation of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP18) on *Conservation of and trade in tortoises and freshwater turtles* and report to the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee on its implementation of this Resolution, including in its report, information on any seizures, arrests, prosecutions and convictions secured as a result of activities implemented to address illegal trade in tortoises from Madagascar.
3. Decision 18.287 directs the Committee to review the report from Madagascar, and any recommendations from the Secretariat, and consider if any further measures need to be implemented by Madagascar to address illegal trade in tortoises.
4. In accordance with Decision 18.286, Madagascar submitted a report to the Secretariat on 30 June 2020 on its implementation of Resolution Conf. 11.9 (Rev. CoP18). The report includes as an Annex the *Regional strategy to combat trafficking in radiated tortoises (Astrochelys radiata) in the Atsimo-Andrefana region of Madagascar*.
5. The Secretariat has evaluated the report submitted by Madagascar and finds that there are encouraging signs of progress, but also scope for improving enforcement of the Convention in relation to tortoises and freshwater turtles and awareness-raising among the general public and local enforcement agencies.
6. The Secretariat notes that the report outlines a variety of measures implemented and activities conducted to support the conservation of tortoises and freshwater turtles and to combat poaching and illegal trade affecting them. The report also suggests some shortcomings and areas for improvement. It contains a comprehensive table outlining seizures of tortoises and freshwater turtles that occurred in the period 2017 to 2019, but reporting on arrests, prosecutions and convictions as anticipated by Decision 18.286, paragraph b), is limited.
7. The Secretariat notes that in terms of the number of incidents of poaching and trafficking being detected, as reported by Madagascar, there seems to be a significant decrease in recent years. However, the Secretariat also noted that additional open source information seems to indicate that some of the more recent cases might have been omitted from Madagascar's report. Although limited in number, it is encouraging to note that the most recent cases resulted in arrests and, where information is available, successful prosecution. These cases however also indicate the need for Madagascar to remain vigilant in addressing this poaching and illegal trade.
8. When addressing this matter, the Standing Committee will need to consider the report from Madagascar, and recommendations from the Secretariat, and decide if any further measures need to be implemented by the Party. Both the report received from Madagascar and the Secretariat's recommendations are ready for consideration by the Committee.